

## **WABASH RIVER HERITAGE CORRIDOR COMMISSION**

**Meeting minutes-November 20, 2002**

**Riehle Plaza**

**Tippecanoe County, Lafayette, IN**

### **Voting members present:**

Allen County-Ron James  
Carroll County-Teresa Maxwell  
DNR-Steve Morris  
Fountain County-Ron Howard  
Huntington County-Mike Mettler  
Miami County-Ken Einselen  
Parke County-John Isaacs  
Sullivan County-John Gettinger  
Tippecanoe County-Norman (Lucky)  
Neiburger  
Vigo County-Keith Ruble  
Wabash County-Ernie Passwater  
Warren County-Louise Jewell

### **Voting members not present:**

Gibson County  
Jay County  
Knox County  
Posey County  
Vermillion County

### **Proxies**

Adams County to Norman Neiburger  
Cass County to Norman Neiburger  
Wells County to Mike Mettler

### **Commission and DNR staff present:**

Susan Benner-WHRCC Exec. Director  
Cynthia Webb-DNR

### **Non-voting members present:**

DOC Tourism-Marianna Weinzapfel  
IDEM-Matt Jarvis (alternate)

### **Non-voting members not present:**

DNR Historic Preservation & Arch.  
Dept. of Transportation

### **Others present:**

Shanna Broussard, Ph.D.,-Purdue University  
Bernie Dahl-Banks of the Wabash  
Rory Robinson-National Parks Service  
Dennis Carson-GLCDC  
Sanders Howse Jr.-GLCDC  
Susan Ulrich-NICHES

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Lucky Neiburger called the meeting to order at 1:03. The attendees introduced themselves.

## **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2002 MEETING MINUTES**

Louise Jewell motioned to approve the minutes as written. Ken Einselen seconded. Motion passed.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Lucky Neiburger read to the commission an e-mail he had received from Steve Morris. The e-mail stated that a funding request for the WRHCC operating expenses had been eliminated from the proposed 2003-2005 DNR budget. In other words, the commission will have to request funding for operating expenses directly from the legislature as has been done in the past. Because the commission's 2001-2003 appropriation fell under DNR, Steve Morris had been asked to submit a budget request for the commission up to the maximum amount previously appropriated, which was \$75,000/year.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)**

It was also reported that in the opinion of DNR's chief legal counsel and the Director of DNR's Division of Accounting, the motions to pre-approve commission expenditures per budget line items would be in conflict with law establishing the commission, IC 13-16-1. Ron Howard questioned why this would not work for the commission as it does for county government. It was suggested to examine the difference between the law establishing the commission and state laws that county governments operate under.

Steve Morris reported the commission law is very specific and reads "Before the funds can be spent for any purpose, a claim for the expenditure must be approved by the commission at a meeting of the commission." As written, the law makes it difficult to streamline commission expenditures such as budget line item approvals, state I.D. billing, and credit accounts. Steve suggested that changing a word or two in the law could rectify this problem.

Lucky suggested the commission form a committee to look at changes to the commission statute and to lobby the legislature for funding.

In regards to mention of a Kinko's credit account, Ron Howard voiced opposition to use of credit accounts for the commission.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Susan Benner, Executive Director spoke of possibly getting assistance from INDOT to help create the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Community signs. The Commission first needs to determine what qualifies a community to bear a Wabash River Heritage Corridor Community sign. Then the Commission will have to determine how many signs will be needed and the size of the signs. The number of signs and their size is basic information that INDOT needs to know in order to determine if they can help us with this project. Three mock signs were shown to the Commission to give them an idea of what the signs may look like. As an example an Adopt-A-River sign was on display at the meeting. The set-up costs for the Adopt-A-River sign are \$500-\$300 with each sign at a cost of \$85.

The Wabash Water Trail map is now on the WRHCC website. The map indicates where each of the public access points are located along the river. Additional information is still being gathered about the public access sites regarding what amenities are available at each site.

On the WRHCC website, tourism information for each county and the Commission Meeting Minutes have been added.

The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is having their annual conference January 5-7, 2003 in Indianapolis. The cost for booth space is \$100. Susan Benner recommended that the Commission have a booth at this conference.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT (continued)**

The American Rivers Organization is asking for support from the Commission to endorse the American River Fiscal Year 2004 River Budget. Susan Benner recommended that the Commission indicate its support of the River Budget.

The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is making progress on their application for the IDEM 205j grant. The grant will be used to hire someone to create an Upper Wabash River Watershed Management Plan.

On October 24<sup>th</sup>, Susan gave a presentation to WALLA (Wabash Area Lifetime Learning Association), and another presentation was given to Frankfort Rotary Club, on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

Susan assisted with Workday for Wildlife at Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service in Lafayette, which was hosted by the National Wildlife Federation and ALCOA.

## **COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT**

Steve Morris passed out financial reports showing itemized accounting for Susan's contract for executive director services. Steve said that other operating expenses should follow the budget schedule that was drawn up in July but never approved. Ron Howard made a motion to adopt the budget that was handed out at the July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2002 meeting. Keith Ruble seconded the motion and motion passed.

Steve Morris asked for approval to pay three claims: Sept/Oct cell phone charges at \$109.79, postage reimbursement for Lucky Neiburger at \$7.92, Lucky Neiburger reimbursement for purchase of AWC Regional Media Guide at \$15.00. Ron James made a motion to approve the expenditures, and Ron Howard seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Susan reported that "Teach the Wabash River" on September 18<sup>th</sup> was a success. Hoosier Energy supplied refreshments, the meeting space, and a speaker, Michalene Reilly. Additional refreshments were provided by Merom Conference Center.

From the Commission, Matt Jarvis, Keith Ruble, Ron Howard, Sherrell Marginet and John Gettinger were in attendance.

Susan's goal is to replicate "Teach the Wabash River" in the spring of 2003, in either Huntington, Cass, Miami, or Wabash counties. Susan will need help from those Commission Members to coordinate another symposium.

Susan brought up the question of whether the current Education Committee is still interested in staying on board or should the Commission members from Huntington, Cass, Miami, and Wabash replace them. Ron Howard stated that the Commissioners closest to the next "Teach the Wabash River" Symposium should be involved. John Gettinger mentioned that he would be willing to remain active with the committee.

## **BANKS OF THE WABASH**

Bernie Dahl spoke of River Keepers, which helps local organizations identify local polluters. Discussion of the Scenic Byway started. Bernie mentioned the Commission should get letters of support from other counties to help spread the scenic byway along the Wabash.

## **BREAK**

At this time Lucky Neiburger announced that we would postpone Old Business until after the speaker.

## **SPEAKER**

Shanna Broussard, PH.D, professor with Purdue University spoke about The Upper Wabash Ecosystem Project.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Corridor Management Plan**

Rory Robinson reported about input received at the first two sets of public meetings. Draft narratives for the plan should be ready by mid-January. In March-April the draft plan will take the form of a document and will be ready to be reviewed by the public.

### **Corridor Brochure**

The Wabash River Corridor Brochure is finished and is ready to be distributed. There were some minor changes made to the text of the brochure, some pictures were replaced and a picture for Sullivan County was added.

### **Legislative Initiative**

Susan passed out Senate and House District maps, a directory of Senators and Representatives, a draft of the WRHCC informative brochure, and the Wabash River Corridor Brochure. Susan is putting together a packet of information about the Commission that could be taken to meetings with the legislators. Some of the goals identified in the legislators packet are: development/promotion of the Wabash River Water Trail, development of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Management Plan, and increase the recognition and influence of the WRHCC throughout the corridor.

Lucky suggested that between now and December 15<sup>th</sup>, Commissioners should be getting in touch with their legislators. The budget needs to be presented before the legislature. Lucky suggested asking state legislators for \$125,000 for WRHCC operating expenses. Rory Robinson suggested asking for \$150,000 from the legislators. Ron James made a motion to ask the legislature for \$150,000 for operating expenses. Ken Einselen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Ron James made a motion to ask the legislation for \$5,000,000 for the WRHCC grant fund. John Isaacs seconded the motion. Motion passed.

## **Legislative initiative (continued)**

Marianna Weinzapfel suggested a letter should be sent to the Commission Members identifying talking points to discuss when meeting with their legislators. Rory Robinson suggested that Susan should put together a list of her accomplishments as Executive Director.

## **Other items**

Ron James mentioned the Resolution No. 0211. The Resolution is a proposal of support for the designation of the River Road as a Scenic Byway in Tippecanoe County. There was discussion as to whether the commission should sign the resolution or not. Teresa Maxwell said more information was needed on the Scenic Byway before signing it. Ernie Passwater made a motion to sign the Resolution and Ken Einselen seconded the motion. Marianna Weinzapfel commented she is on a committee dealing with Scenic Byways. Ron Howard made a motion to table the resolution until the next meeting. John Gettinger seconded the motion. Motion to table was passed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Suggestions for future speakers**

None

### **Letters sent/Letters received**

Susan was sent a thank you letter from the Indiana State Museum for participating in the Teachers Workshop. She was also sent a thank you letter from the Natures Classroom for allowing them to participate in "Teach the Wabash River."

Susan received a letter from the Wabash Coordinating Committee requesting information on what the WHRCC is planning on doing in the future.

Susan received a letter from a man in Ohio wanting a Wabash Brochure.

A letter of support was sent to Friends of the Limberlost.

## **Other items**

Susan's contract came up for renewal. John Gettinger made the motion to renew Susan's contract and Ron Howard seconded the motion. There was discussion on how well Susan does her job. Keith Ruble said she has started out on scratch and has come up with creative ideas on her own. Keith's secretaries have commented about the amount of e-mails they receive from Susan keeping them up-to-date on things going on. John Isaacs mentioned how well organized Susan is, and that she has put in a lot of hours she won't be paid for. John Gettinger commented on how Susan keeps things going, and always does what the commission asks of her. We are glad to have her aboard!!! Motion passed unanimously.

The American Rivers Organization is asking for the support of the Commission to endorse the American River FY04 River Budget. Matt Jarvis made the motion to approve giving support for the American River Budget. John Isaacs seconded the motion, motion passed. The deadline for the River Budget is November 29<sup>th</sup>, Susan is going to e-mail them our support.

**Other items new business (continued)**

Susan was requesting \$100 for space booth at the Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Annual Conference, which is being held January 5-7, 2003. Mike Mettler made a motion to approve the \$100 expenditure for booth space. Ron James seconded it and it passed.

Susan reported on the Wabash Corridor Community Signs. She needs to know which communities to target and the number of signs needed. Marianna Weinzapfel made a suggestion of setting up a committee. Susan is going to research to determine if the Commission already has a committee created that this project may fall under.

**Huntington Lake Dam Hydroelectric Project**

There was discussion about the proposed hydroelectric application in Huntington Lake. Mike Mettler made the motion that using the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Management Plan, a letter stating the views of the Commission would be sent to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. John Gettinger seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Announcements**

Steve Morris received a wire from the Indianapolis Star. It reported that Indiana is receiving \$1 million in grants from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect endangered species. One grant is \$850,000 for nesting habitat for least terns. The least terns nests are located next to Gibson County's Cinergy Generating Station.

Emily Kress was approached by David Dale, a painter artisan, about possible painting the Wabash River at each of the 19 counties. Mr. Dale may possibly donate the proceeds of the auctioned paintings to the Commission.

**General Discussion**

John Gettinger proudly displayed the sign for the Turtle Creek Watershed.

**Next Meeting – January 8, 2003, Training Center at Cayuga Station-Vermillion County  
At 1 PM with pre-meeting activities beginning at 10 AM.**